

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PALM DESERT  
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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MHOON, R. C. (BUD) & IVA

Interviewed by

Patricia Young

January 9, 1980



INTERVIEWEE: R. C. (BUD) & IVA MHOON

INTERVIEWER: Patricia Young

SUBJECT:

DATE: 9 January 1980

TRANSCRIBER: Linda A. Jantzen

PY: This is an interview with Mr. and Mrs. Bud Mhoon for the Historical Society of Palm Desert. The interviewer is Patricia Young, and the interview is taking place at their home on 13 Beavertail Lane in Palm Desert in the Silver Spur Mobile Home Park. Today is Wednesday, January 9, 1980, and it's nine-ten in the morning.

I think this morning let's talk about how you first came to Palm Desert, and what your experiences initially here were, and why you came.

RM: We moved from Long Beach where we had lived for nineteen years. I worked in the oil fields in the police department, Signal Hill. And we moved out here more or less to get away from Long Beach where it was damp. We moved to Cathedral City where my father had moved in about, oh, a couple of months before we moved out. And we opened an



office in Cathedral City and started contracting. When Palm Desert started to open, we came to Palm Desert to just build. And we bought several lots from Cliff Henderson and started building in Palm Desert. Is that what you want to know?

PY: Yes. What year did you come here?

RM: In 1945, November. And we were in the construction business, I think, thirty some odd years here. And I don't know what to say.

PY: You were telling me earlier about what was here when you first came out here in terms of building.

RM: No, when we came out here, as I remember, the adobes were in Palm Desert. And just up 74 a little ways from the adobes was one house. And I think that was about all the houses in that particular area. Mrs. Nolan lived up where Silver Spur is now. She owned that area. And you want to hear about her?

PY: Yes.

RM: She came out here with her husband who had been gassed in World War I, and quite a few soldiers that came out here for that reason. And some of them left and she bought up some of their homesteads and started later in years the Silver Spur. The first July that we were here, I think



that's when Cliff Henderson actually had the opening of Palm Desert. I believe that's when it was. And we went out to see that, and he gave us a talk as to who was going to build here and so forth which was quite interesting to us. And we bought a lot later from him and started building speculative houses here. Cliff Henderson built the first house, his own, and Carl Henderson was second. And we were built this third one. And we went from there building more houses in Palm Desert on the, particularly the first, I forget the name of the street, the first streets above the club there. The entrance to the club. Oh, heck, I don't know.

IM: Well, this is where Patton's army was down here during the war, you know. And it was, the foundations and everything was still in that they had to tear out to make this new subdivision which was very thrilling.

PY: You were telling me earlier about the first houses you put in, or actually you were telling me that when you went to talk to Cliff Henderson to actually purchase the lots, he was telling you who was going to buy them. And there were like the directors were the only people.

RM: Yes, he was mentioning Leonard Firestone, Edgar Bergen and so forth, and as he'd mention those, I'd look down at



this sign at the bottom of the chair he was standing on, and those were the people that he was talking about going to build these houses, which eventually they did here. The first house that we built was a small house, one bathroom and two bedrooms. Cliff thought that at the time that that would be a good house to build. We had a heck of a time selling it with one bathroom. And after that, we started the larger houses which went very well here. And after, oh, I think about five years of that, then Thunderbird had started. And we went down there and did a lot of building in the Thunderbird area. We had our first office in Cathedral City, and then we tried Indio. There wasn't any money down there. You couldn't get any loans in that; there was only one bank. After other banks came in, why then loans were easier to get. And we did some remodeling for Cliff Henderson at the Shadow Mountain Club. And their old real estate office, which was where the Bank of America just moved out of into their bank. We had our office there for a number of years. And then moved down by the Bancroft Building. And then later close to the Red Barn. And we had that office there until we retired in 1975. I know a lot of things like tell you about snakes we used to go get. (laughter)



PY: Sure. All of that's of interest.

RM: When we first moved out here, there wasn't very many people, and it was in March, as I remember, the, it was just getting the little warm days, but it was cool at night. And we would go, what is now known as, or go on what is known as Bob Hope Drive around to Sinatra Drive, a complete circle in the evenings and looking for side-winders which would come up on the highway to get warm. And I know we ended up with a whole fruit jar full of little rattles from those snakes. There was that many at that time which you don't see very few of those side-winders today.

IM: That was our recreation.

RM: That was our recreation. (laughter) It sure was.

IM: Some of us would sit on the fenders, and the others, one would drive, and then when we would spot one, they would look like a little rope on the blacktop. And we'd get out and we would either club them (laughter) or we got to shooting them. But that wasn't very satisfactory, so we just carried on with a couple of seasons like that until they got less and less.

PY: What was the community like here? I take it you were actually living in Palm Desert in the home you built.



RM: No, we were living in Cathedral City. It was just a village there. There wasn't anything, there was nobody living in Palm Desert at that time. There was a village.

IM: They called the village.

RM: Yes. Village was something, was across the street.

IM: All on the north side, all on the north side of the highway. There was none as you know on the south side except just the adobe . . . two houses there.

RM: Houses on the north side. There was a water well, was on the north side. And they had a big swimming pool there that was open to the public. And one of our recreations coming up here in the summertime was swimming. And I think there was, I don't remember whether there was a little store there or not. But the village was open, and that was all on the south side of the highway. There was nothing at that time.

IM: That was removed many years ago. It was quite a large pool. In fact, didn't they use it for a reservoir?

RM: I don't know. No, they couldn't use it for a reservoir because that was drinking water.

PY: Was it meant just as a swimming, the water well, was it anything else but a swimming pool or . . .

RM: No, the water well was for the water in Palm Village they



called it.

IM: Yes, Palm Village.

RM: Palm Village, that area. And that's all there was. That was a subdivision. But it has grown, you know.

IM: People was here primarily to, for their dates, you know; the date gardens were here. And that was about the only produce actually. They hadn't started the vegetable gardens and so forth. Maybe down in Coachella Valley and that area there was, but up in here there was only dates. And then desert was all there was here.

PY: What was your experience starting Thunderbird, that whole area? What had it been before?

RM: I didn't start Thunderbird, or have any part of that. All we did was after they started . . .

IM: It was a ranch first.

RM: It was originally Thunderbird, Frank Bogert was manager of this horse ranch there. They had no golf course at all. They had a big swimming pool. We used to go out there a lot in the summer after they started and would go swimming out there for recreation during the summer months. Then Thunderbird started. I think there was Johnny Dawson was the main person behind Thunderbird, I think. That's a guess on my part, but I knew Johnny. And after they got



started, a man by the name of Lou Manzo, who's a realtor there, was starting to build. So, oh, I think there was three of us started building houses at the same time. We built the first one for Joe Dyer. It was the first one completed at Thunderbird at that time. And then we went on from there and built, oh, I know we built at least fifty percent of those houses at Thunderbird. At least that many. And that was, we built Bing Crosby's house there. And we built Bing Crosby's house here in Palm Desert. And, oh, Jimmy Van Heusen's we built here in Palm Desert. He was first at Thunderbird and then moved out here. And Pete Petito, he was in that same crowd. And I forget the other, there was four of them that were out there at that time.

IM: But wasn't it General Motors that most of the men came out here to retire that built houses?

RM: Oh, there was people from all over the United States built houses at Thunderbird. The New York people, the eastern people, I liked to build for them, they didn't argue about price. (chuckle) They wanted to know where their dollar was going, you'd show them where their dollar was going, and that was it. And it was really a pleasure building there, I know that, from that standpoint.



PY: What were costs like then? I mean what were you building homes for?

RM: Oh, we could build houses at that time, nice homes, from thirty-five up to forty-five thousand. And from that they started on up. Then as more people came out to Thunderbird because that was one of your first big golf courses, the houses got larger. And I think the biggest one we built was, oh, I think almost half a million dollars there.

PY: When was that?

RM: Oh, this was in the seventies here. When did I build? Glenn Kraemer's house.

IM: Ten years ago.

RM: No, it wasn't that . . . well, just about eight or ten years ago, something like that.

IM: And Fred Wilson's place. That wasn't very far from that.

RM: Yes, well, that one didn't cost that much. That was a couple of hundred thousand there. But it was a pleasure to build for those people. Of the last fifteen years we were in business there, we never even had a written contract with those people, none of them. We would shake hands and that would be it. We'd find out how much the price was going to be approximately, and we always gave them an itemized list of our costs. And never did have



an argument with any of the Thunderbird people. Most of our building here in Palm Desert was speculative because, and they were hard to sell. The houses were hard to sell in those early days. They weren't easy to sell. And, oh, we quit building here more or less because there just wasn't the, you had to build speculative or not build. And then there was actually, oh, the first four or five years in Palm Desert, I think there was only three contractors. There was Floyd Staggs and Dean Roberts, both of them very good contractors, and ourselves. That was all that were here, so we had it pretty nice for quite awhile here.

PY: Why was it hard to sell the spec houses?

RM: Well, the people, it was new here. And the people just weren't ready, I don't think, to move in here until you got some more houses. And that's why we tried to just kind of spot them around on different streets. I can go down there, I can't even find hardly the houses I built. The trees and everything have grown up, and they're hard to spot. I know we sold one house to Edith Eddy Ward, who was a prominent realtor for a lot of years. But it was just hard to sell houses, that was all.

PY: You were telling me about one of the first that you built



with the two bedroom, one bath, that you ended up selling that for some low price.

RM: Twelve or thirteen thousand dollars, I think it was. And we made money on that house at that price. And that included the lot. It's still down here at Palm Desert.

PY: What were you buying the lots for? That was from Cliff?

RM: Twelve hundred dollars, in that. We bought a lot of lots, twelve and fourteen hundred dollars in those days.

IM: Money wasn't as easy to come by then as it is today.

RM: You couldn't get loans. Loans were impossible until other banks started moving in. And then loans then became easier.

PY: You were saying the only bank was in Indio?

RM: Here. There was the Bank of America was in Palm Springs. That was the only bank, I believe, at that time. In Indio, there was only the Bank of America at that time as far as I know. And you'd go in and ask for a loan. There was so many people in Indio at that time who would like to have had houses, but they only had five hundred or a thousand dollars, and they couldn't, and owned a lot, they couldn't get a loan at that time to build. But after other banks started in there, why it made a lot of difference in these loans.



PY: When did that happen?

RM: Oh, that happened around the fifties sometimes.

IM: Around the early fifties.

RM: Early fifties. But we had this office in Indio. And we had to give it up because there just wasn't no loans and you'd see lots of people with a thousand dollars or something, but they couldn't make a down payment on a house.

IM: Raining again.

PY: Yes.

RM: Yes.

IM: Oh, this is a nice day. I like rainy days.

PY: Very pretty. Such a view you have here, too.

IM: Isn't this nice? That's why we chose it.

RM: And we like it up here real well.

IM: Well, now this was just like the desert was when we came. Now this what you see out here all in the raw was just like our desert. In fact, that's why we like it here. It reminds us of the olden days. (chuckle)

PY: What was Cathedral City like when you

IM: Oh, a very small village. It was a very small village. You knew everyone there. And what was the name of our social, Jamboree.

RM: Oh, yes. We had the jamboree every year. A town hall,



and we had a court there, eight apartments that we built up. And we rented them to the men from the Hundred and Thirty-nine Club which was operating in those days.

IM: There was gambling in those days here.

PY: In Cathedral City?

IM: Yes. We had two gambling clubs.

RM: And we remodeled one of those clubs. In this one club, the walls were made of plywood. And on this plywood, if you were a movie star or a very important person, why you would take a chalk, a dark chalk, and write your name on this wall. And then somebody would take one of these electric, it looks something like a soldering iron, but they can . . .

IM: Burn it on.

RM: Burn it, right, through your name. And there was hundreds, I mean hundreds, of these things.

IM: It was a very popular club, I may add. There was people from Los Angeles and Hollywood in there, and they made it a big thing. What was the name of that? The man that owned that.

RM: Yes, well, I'm not going to mention those names.

IM: Oh. (laughter)

RM: But this . . .



IM: You were renting your apartments.

RM: Oh, I was talking about this sign, or these names. Even at that time there was a lot of this people who had, you know, passed on. And these panels, there must have been, I forgot how many panels there were. There was quite a group of them. And they were enlarging the room, gambling room I should say. And the only thing that the owner was interested in was that we move these panels and put them up and not ruin them in any way. And when we got through, that's the only thing he looked at, was the panels to make sure they were in place just like they should be.

IM: They were important.

RM: And that was the only thing that was important to him.

IM: Yes.

RM: But these people that lived in the court from the club, they were real nice fellows. We found a lot of those families.

IM: All couples.

RM: And we used, they used to go with us after these sidewinders out on the highway. And I've seen sidewinders, I've killed sidewinders right here in Palm Desert, and oh, at Bill Crosby's house over here, we killed several



rattlesnakes over there. I remember one time when I heard about several snakes being in the swimming pools over there, too, which is a dangerous thing.

IM: This may not be what she wants.

PY: Oh, no. This is fine.

RM: Well, I'm trying to think of things that happened. I don't know what to do.

IM: Cactus Jumpers Jamboree. That is the name of the, once a month they'd probably had a big steak fry or they would barbecue beef under the ground. And beans. The Cobbs and Hillerys were oldtimers at that time, and they would take charge. And they would bake these beans and, oh, it was an all-day affair. And the Wallers, he was in charge of the sound system. And he'd have these loud speakers that you could hear all over town, you know. And he'd play these different popular records at that time to bring the people in. It was a charge affair, you know, but it was sort of a fair. And we had a lot of fun doing it.

RM: Oh, they'd raise money that way.

PY: For?

IM: The library.

RM: For the library. I know we built a Girl Scout . . .



IM: Yes. Girl Scout building down on, at the school.

RM: We did that ourselves. We just donated that lumber and built it for them. It was easier to do that, fool around on this raising the money for it, so we just did that ourselves to help out. It was just a village. That's all it was. Everybody knew each other and it was really nice in those days, too.

IM: No sidewalks. Everything was dirt roads through there at that time.

PY: This is the what, mid forties, we're talking about?

IM: Late forties. We come in forty-six, something like that, so it was two or three years later than that.

PY: Were you raising children there?

IM: No.

RM: No. No, we lived in Long Beach nineteen years. We've been married fifty what, three years?

IM: Our next one will be fifty-three.

RM: Yes. But it was one thing that used to amuse me, though. When we had our office here in Palm Desert, in the summertime, you only had a couple of lanes on the highway then, or just a lane each way. And in the hot summer day, you could stand out there for fifteen or twenty minutes and there wouldn't be a car come by. Try that



now. (laughter) Not a car would come by in that length of time. It was . . .

IM: It's gone a long ways.

RM: Well, I think they've worked over the road now and added to it about three or four times since then. But there was no Tamarisk in those days. There wasn't anything. The golf courses, I think, made the whole desert, really I do, because there's so many now and that's the thing I think most people want out here along with the weather. Because I don't think there's too much other things to do out here. And I don't know what else to tell you.

PY: So Thunderbird really changed, made a change in the way people were living out here.

IM: Oh, yes.

RM: I think that Thunderbird and Tamarisk changed the whole desert here. I really do. I think it brought in the people. It brought in so many people with the vision to go ahead. See, what was happening, the people that came out here every year for a few months could see the change. I think the people living here couldn't see that change, as well as they did anyhow. And I think that golf courses coming in and so forth because they were all large, and most of them private clubs at that



time. So that was what I think really started this desert moving. And you might say that Shadow Mountain Club was, actually you could put that ahead of Thunderbird and any of them starting that because it was here first. And that was your first, I think, really nice golf course at that time.

PY: The people that were coming to Shadow Mountain Club, though, were they like more or less full-time residents as opposed to part-time?

RM: I don't think so at that time. I don't think they were because there wasn't that many houses here.

IM: Later it become quite a family club. It was known as a family club. It was a nice place to go, nice place to eat. And I think it was one of the high spots of the whole desert.

RM: Yes, but it was more of a family deal where your big clubs are a lot different, I think, than what the Shadow Mountain was at that time. I think Shadow Mountain has changed it now and got away, I don't know because I haven't been there in years to the club, but I presume that it's changed a lot from back in those days when it was just a family club there. But it was nice, and Cliff did a nice job in building that and running it, too.



IM: He worked hard. He worked hard on this project.

RM: Yes, he worked very hard at that.

IM: And he had another brother that had the paper at that time, the magazine.

RM: Yes.

IM: It now still is still down here.

PY: Randall Henderson.

IM: Randall.

RM: Randall. The first Bank of America here was in that building after Randall Henderson, I think sold it or gave it up or something. I'm not sure, but that was where the Bank of America was, the first Bank of America here. And then they built where our office was and moved into there, and now have their new bank. But you know there wasn't any building and loans out here in those days either. None at all. Now they're on every corner. (chuckle)

IM: In fact, they frowned upon it.

PY: How did people build? I mean how did they afford it?

IM: Well, that's why it was hard to get on, to get started.

PY: That's true.

RM: The only way that the people out here, so many of them couldn't. You had a lot of people Oregon and Washington, and they make that pretty hard, I think their money that they make out there. They don't make it as easy as some



of these other people do. But at Thunderbird, and we built a lot of houses there, in all the building that I did there, there was one mortgage involved in all those years. Everything else was cash. And that mortgage, we took ourselves, and handled that ourselves. But in all those years, that's the way it was. But here it was a different deal all together. You had different people here. You didn't have the millionaires and so forth that you have at the big golf clubs at that time. I don't know how . . . Got a lot of them here now, I think, but you didn't at that time. That's why it was more of a family club, in my opinion. I never belonged to Shadow Mountain Club. My father did. And he used to go quite a bit, but I never cared for clubs.

PY: Did the whole area, then, sort of develop at the same time on the south side?

RM: The south side, I think after a few houses, in my opinion, was kind of dormant there for years. And there wasn't hardly anything doing, I don't think. There was a building now and then, but that was all. And a few houses. But not enough to really cause any excitement. And I think where at Palm Springs and some of those places were moving out, Palm Desert was just slow. But



when it did take hold, it really started going. And that's been going for quite a few years now. Not like it is right now. Everything is going now.

PY: Oh, that's a whole different bailiwick. Did you work at all in Indian Wells?

RM: I never worked and never tried to do any building there. I worked in El Dorado. I built several houses there, but I stayed closer to Thunderbird. I belonged to Thunderbird at that time. And, although I didn't go to many parties there, but that was where my heart really was, was Thunderbird. I enjoyed that very, very much. And the people. Their people were wonderful. They treated us real swell, I know that. Made it possible for us to retire anyhow.

PY: Well, that makes you feel real good about them.

RM: Oh, yes.

IM: Yes, it does.

RM: Well, I found out that working on a cash basis that way was a lot better than having to fool around with these mortgages. And then when you could get loans here, you had to take in receipts and so forth to the bank, which is good business. And I just didn't like that. We built one house in Indio, which he had a first mortgage



on that. And I think they borrowed the money to get the lot. And we ended up, the people there, I mean it was hard to get money, and the, she ended up, well, when we finished we never got all of our money for several years, which she wanted to give us her wedding rings and a diamond, what few little diamonds she had. I mean it was a real nice couple and they wanted a home. So we helped them out. We didn't take their rings and so forth, but we waited for our money; we finally got it. But when you're working for cash, it's a lot better, in my opinion, than on these mortgages.

PY: Absolutely.

RM: Yes. I don't know, anything else.

PY: I take it you worked together, that you were the company together, the two of you.

RM: No, she run the apartment.

IM: No. I had the apartment, but I never was working in the office only temporarily at times to relieve.

RM: My father and I started the business. He started it actually because I didn't want to come to the desert. I wanted to go to the high sierras, up above Bishop. We were talking about buying the Penny Tavern up there, which was skiing and fishing and all those things.



IM: Mammouth.

RM: Mammouth Lakes area. And my wife and dad wanted to come out here, so they won the argument. And we started in business here, but we had the apartments. My wife took care of those. And, oh, we had, one secretary worked for us four years. They're still down here in the valley. And when we quit, the girl had worked for us twenty-three years when we retired. That was in 1975 that we quit, end of 1975.

IM: And you also had the same superintendent for twenty-four or five years.

RM: Yes.

PY: Boy, that shows reliability.

RM: Oh, they were good people. We'd leave for a couple of months and didn't have to worry.

IM: It was a good company.

RM: We stayed little; we didn't want to get big. That was, not interested in that. And it worked out very well. We'd build, oh, at Thunderbird maybe three houses or four houses a year, and that would be enough because you got enough for them, where a lot of these people building these fifteen, twenty thousand dollar houses at that time, you'd have to build a lot of them to make any money. So we found out the bigger houses were about the best.



IM: But we actually was going to come down here just for three or four years to make enough to get up to the high sierras, but we're not up there yet. (chuckle)

PY: Well, I think that shows a love for the desert.

IM: Yes, I think that's a good one. Yes, that's a good way to put it.

PY: Did people come to Cathedral City in the forties and fifties for entertainment or . . .

IM: No, usually for health. Yes.

RM: That was a working man's town.

IM: It's a working man's town.

RM: Cathedral was. That's all, it was a working man's town.

IM: Poor man's Palm Springs.

RM: It was a lot of fun living there, I'll tell you, because you knew everybody. And we did a lot of fishing in those days. Go to the Colorado River, a group of us, and we'd bring back a carload of trout. And then we'd have a big fish fry at Cathedral in those days. You could because everybody knew each other. I go to Cathedral now and I don't know anybody. It's where we could go where our apartments were, which was right off of 111, you could look right through there and see clear to the mountains and no houses would bother you at all. There would be



just a few spotted around, and that would be it.

PY: Is your apartment building still standing?

IM: Yes.

RM: Oh, yes. Blue Manor in Cathedral.

IM: It's still under Blue Manor. Yes. Doesn't look anything like it did when I had it, though. (chuckle) They're very old and they're very rundown and they're nothing like what we had it, we kept it.

PY: Where was most of the building, in around Cathedral Canyon and 111?

RM: It was all over, what there was.

IM: The Sun Aire, there was nothing in Sun Aire. That was developed after we were there.

RM: We built the first house there.

IM: There was nothing on the other side of Cathedral Canyon, even up in the hills. That's all been developed since we were here. So it was way out in the boondocks. We've seen it grow.

PY: Where did you build the first house there?

RM: Gosh. Oh!

IM: Bill Ellis' house.

RM: No.

IM: That's the first one in Sun Aire.



RM: ~~It~~ It wasn't. We built apartments to start with.

IM: Well, yes. Yes.

RM: And Forbes.

IM: Forbes.

RM: We built some apartments for Forbes.

IM: A lot of duplexes, small duplexes.

RM: That's all we knew how to build. (chuckle)

IM: Lot of, well, we got our feet wet on those.

RM: We didn't have any experience; I didn't know one end of a hammer from the other when we came out here. My dad, he didn't know too much.

IM: He probably knew a lot more than you did.

RM: He figured houses and building costs by the foot, and if you want to go broke, that's a good way to do it. Because you can't come out ahead that . . . and we hired a fellow that knew building quite well. And he taught me how to figure a house because you start and have to figure everything that goes in that house piece by piece or you're going to go get hurt if you just start guessing. Because I know Dad guessed at the first couple of houses on the footage basis for these duplex. Gee whiz, before we'd known it, we'd lost ten, fifteen thousand dollars, which was quite a bit in those days. And then I started guessing. I guessed up higher, and we did gain most of that back, but after Bob went to work for us, why I



learned how to figure houses. From there you learn, and I knew what a plan looked like, could figure, read plans, so I didn't have too much trouble from that part, but I didn't know how to break down a house in cost, but you've got to do that or you're going to get hurt. There's still some of these contractors that guess at that and they don't last too long.

PY: Is there desert housing as such? I mean is there something that people look for in a desert house that's different?

RM: Oh, I think they like open living by lots of glass and so forth, in sliding doors in the house. I think that's one of the main things. And I think most of their living, most of the houses, even the big houses, were more or less on the informal side. That's what I call desert living, or think is desert living.

PY: And landscaping, was that, is that different out here?

RM: I think, no, I think that's more or less the choice. I like them myself. I like to have green around me and look out across the desert. And most of the houses that we built have lawns and just the regular, well, they are in Palm Desert, you'll notice that. Sometimes you'll see a lot of cactus and so forth, but I think you find more



just be just regular planting than you do just the cactus and that. I remember, oh, it's got to be about twenty-five years ago now that right here in the desert, right across here, this retaining bank wasn't here at that time. And we had a flash flood from up here that went, we had about three houses, one of them was in escrow here in Palm Desert, and we did have, our houses were pretty well protected. And, oh, we had a little undermining in one of the driveways that was concrete, but some of the houses this water would go right on through one door, or in one door and out the other. And big boulders, rocks, good-sized rocks, just the force of the silt in the water that's moving, just take that, roll that right on down the hill with it. And then they put up this first dike, and this one here went out here two or three years ago.

IM: Six years ago now.

RM: Has it been that long ago? And then they put in a larger one here now that's held up pretty good, I guess.

IM: But that hasn't changed as far as that goes. We saw some very big flash floods. But we still have them, too. There was a lot of houses that were damaged this last one we had here.

RM: I don't think we talked about that, though, do we? (laughter)



PY: Oh, you'd be surprised.

IM: Well, sure, it's history.

RM: I think the *present* city, though, in their building have made a lot of improvements by raising the height of the floors and so forth, and making the contractors put in enough fill to be above this water line which is a wonderful thing here in Palm Desert, and all over the desert because people come out here and they're strange to the desert. They don't know that they ever have floods here. And those people get hurt. But I think the City of Palm Desert is doing a beautiful job on it. I noticed these different houses and so forth, you see the lots are, it costs a lot of money to bring in that fill. But in doing that, they're going to save themselves lots of money later on. And the poor people that buy it don't know it. It's going to save them a lot. I was down here from up north in July, just a couple of days after this last flood that we had, and the Rancho Mirage and Palm Desert was hit pretty hard. And it was a shame that so many of them had got hit by the water here a few years ago, and then had new carpets and all, here they got hit again. And it goes right on through the house again.

IM: Yes.



RM: But the city's taken care of that. I think they're doing a good job of that, the City Council. Well, I don't know of anything else that . . .

IM: How come you getting into this?

PY: Well, I think it's my interest, I think, more than anything else.

IM: Is it?

RM: Yes.

IM: Good.

RM: We told you anything that you can use or interested in, why that's . . .

PY: Oh, yes. Are there special, I mean like women's groups, there seem to be so many clubs around now. Was that typical of the forties and fifties that there would be a lot of clubs like women's clubs and . . .

IM: Well, in Cathedral there was the Woman's Club there that was been active, still active, that was the only thing when we lived in Cathedral City. But now that we're living in Palm Desert there is, as you say, many, many of them. I think we have something like three garden clubs here and several. Indio has one and, oh, I think they have a couple of them. But there is many clubs.



PY: But it wasn't a particular, I mean the Woman's Club wasn't particularly strong? I don't know what men had, but it wasn't the club life that there is now or . . .

IM: No. No, it wasn't. It was social club actually. Well, we did do things, you know, raise money for different things to contribute to, but now they've gotten into quite a deal now. We have the Desert Poor which is a Republican women's club. And the Woman's Club of the Desert. And many of them. Yes, I think it's good. It gives the gals something to go to. Gets it

PY: With the women working, there's less time to go to them.

IM: Yes, yes, of course, there is.

RM: Each community had a Chamber of Commerce, and that was usually your ruling body for like Cathedral, it still is, I guess, at Cathedral. And each community had that, which was a wonderful thing. So you had some form of government in a small way. And there was quite a few service clubs started out here right after the war, a few years after the war. I know the Lion's Club in Cathedral City started. I don't know anything about the Rotary. I know there's a Rotary here, but, of course, these clubs have got to be newer here because this is a newer city. But I don't think there was any service clubs in Cathedral City



until the Lion's Club come in. But your Chamber of Commerce kind of ruled everything and they took care of these jamborees and all those things. And that was your ruling body, and that was about all that you had in those days, which I think was pretty nice.

IM: Well, everyone belonged to it, and everyone seemed to do their job. And everything went along pretty smoothly, you know. Every once in awhile there would be a . . .

END OF INTERVIEW